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The House of Representatives wrapped up work last week on what the new Democratic majority has labeled as their so-called 100-hour agenda. If the first three weeks of legislative session are any indication of what to expect throughout the rest of the term, Americans should prepare for a more intrusive federal government and billions in new spending financed by higher taxes.

Just hours after new House Speaker Nance Pelosi picked up the gavel and began the 110th Congress, Democrats were already rewriting House rules to make it easier to increase taxes by weakening the existing requirements of a three-fifths committee vote to increase taxes and restrictions on retroactive tax increases. Even worse are the new pay-as-you-go spending requirements, known as PAYGO. These new budget rules, disguised as a fiscally responsible deficit reducer, are nothing more than a tactical tool built into the House rules that will make it easier to justify tax increases to pay for new spending.

The 100-hour agenda was packed with bills that made for good sound bites on the campaign trail but lacking any substance to back them up. The most costly of these proposals may be the reworking of the new Medicare prescription drug program. In the first year of the program, 80 percent of beneficiaries were satisfied with their coverage. The benefit allows recipients to choose between various drug plans offered by hundreds of providers who negotiate directly with drug companies. The competition among providers has saved taxpayers \$13 billion and reduced the cost to seniors for the benefit from the average \$38 per month originally projected to only \$24 per month.

Now, that is called an efficient market, and we need to allow these forces to work through government more often. So in their wisdom, the Democrats passed a bill that would replace the efficient market forces with government price controls. They have tried to weaken this program in order to have the government, rather than patients and doctors, make more health care decisions. It is nothing more than a solution that will not work for a problem that does not exist.

The Democrats were even able to apply the style-over-substance approach to national security. While working on the 9/11 Commission recommendations, they inserted a provision that has nothing to do with the 9/11 Commission, but pleases one of their key constituencies. By approving legislation to unionize airport baggage screeners the Democrats are trying to make it more difficult to eliminate positions when it becomes safer and more efficient to use automated machines to perform certain screening tasks.

Democrats added the icing to the cake Jan. 18 by passing the final piece of their 100-hour agenda, their first tax increase. Camouflaged as a plan to promote alternative energy, the bill really creates disincentives for the domestic production of oil and gas and creates an effective tax increase on energy companies that will be passed along to consumers at the pump and at home.

To go along with their first tax increase, the Democrats were able to show they are still the same tax-and-spend Democrats of old. Their tax bill spends all of the \$14 billion in new revenue on, you guessed it, new spending.

It took the Democrats only 15 days to pass their first tax increase, only 15 days to pass billions of dollars in spending increases, only 15 days to enlarge the role of government in our lives.

The Democrats have charted the course for the next 715 days of this Congress. The Republicans have to accept their new role as the loyal opposition and resist the forthcoming tax-and-spend policies and bigger government at every step of the process. And you can bet we will.